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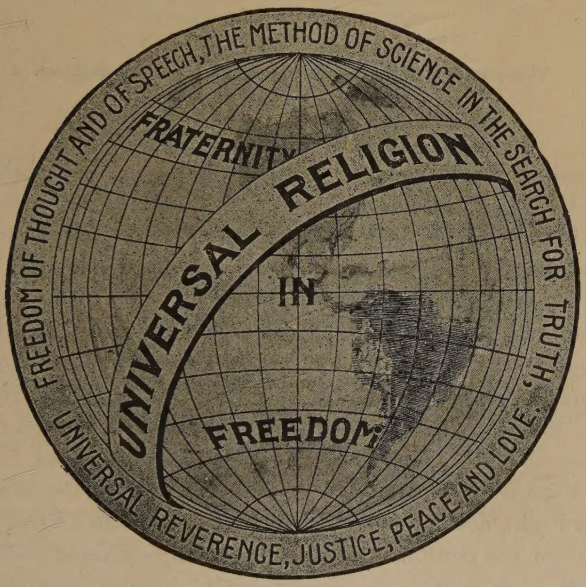
FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND OF SPEECH, THE METHOD OF SCIENCE IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH,
FRATERNITY
UNIVERSAL RELIGION
IN
FREEDOM
UNIVERSAL REVERENCE, JUSTICE, PEACE AND LOVE.

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THE MODERN POETS AS APOSTLES OF LIBERALISM*

BY JOHN ARTHUR,
Vice-president of the Seattle Society for Universal Religion.

(Concluded.)

Crossing the Tweed into North Britain, we find in the period covered by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars three princes in the realm of song: Robert Burns, Walter Scott and Thomas Campbell. These gifted men redeemed Scotland from the intellectual blight which had been brought upon it by the fierce religious fanaticism that sturdy old John Knox had instilled into the generous Scottish heart, and which, as Mrs. Oliphant points out and laments, had severed the intimate and fraternal relation of Scotland to the civilized world and isolated that brave and noble land from the brotherhood of Nations. As the close friend and ally of France from the days of John Balliol to the tragedy of Flodden Field, and in some degree down even to Culloden, Scotland had on the continent of Europe an unquestioned position as a nation of high spirit, chivalric temper, intense patriotism, and distinguished military genius. In the prolonged warfare with her stronger, richer and more populous neighbor on the South, the noblest blood of Scotland had been shed in the line of battle; the Flowers of the Forest had fallen; the spirit of old Scotia had succumbed to disastrous Destiny; like Prussia after the death of Frederick the Great, the land of heroes had become exhausted and helpless; the loss of its independence and nationality had become a mere matter of mercenary negotiation; and the size of the English purse was the measure of that legislative and national suicide which Burns bewailed and denounced as

*Address delivered before the First Free Church of Tacoma and the Seattle Society for Universal Religion, Feb. 23rd and March 9th, 1902.

THE UNION.

Fareweel to a' Scottish fame,
  Fareweel our ancient glory!
Fareweel even to the Scottish name,
  Sae famed in martial story!
Now Sark rins o'er the Solway sands,
  And Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands;
  Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

What guile or force could not subdue,
  Through many warlike ages,
Is wrought now by a coward few,
  For hireling traitors' wages.
The English steel we could disdain,
  Secure in valor's station,
But English gold has been our bane;—
  Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

O would, or had I seen the day
  That treason thus could sell us,
My auld gray head had lien in clay,
  Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour
  I'll mak this declaration,
We're bought and sold for English gold;—
  Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

The fervid patriotic spirit here brought out filled and tore the heart of the Ayrshire ploughman, and, more than the beauty and sentiment of his songs, made him the best-beloved of all the sons of Scotland; for the core of the people was sound and was deeply stirred by the extinction of their nationality. Burns saw the old proud Scotland turned into a pasture for graceless bigots, and, like a Hebrew Prophet, he mourned and wept over the degeneracy of his people. The circumstances of the country made him at once an ardent Jacobite and a genuine Republican. He gloried in the success of the American Rebels who founded this Republic and left an unfinished drama with George Washington as the hero; and at the imminent risk of his livelihood, if not of his life, he rejoiced in song over the victories which the French Republicans had won against the monarchical alliance that had been organized and supported by means of English money. America and France were the countries of his soul, and England the country of his special detestation. It is therefore not without reason that we erect monuments to him in the United States and annually celebrate his birthday, while in England he is either ignored or sneered at.

Burns was one of the first Scotchmen who publicly fought and flouted the well-nigh omnipotent Presbyterian clergy. He regarded them, like English gold, as the bane of his country and as an enemy to be resisted even unto death. We have already adverted to his opinion of "their rotten, hollow hearts" and his longing for adequate power to show them up in their true light; but we must not pass by, without at least a glance, his inimitable presentment of the doctrine of predestination in

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

O Thou, wha in the Heaven dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel,
Sends ane to Heaven, and ten to Hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burning an' a shining light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get such exaltation?
I, wha deserve such just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell
Thou might hae plunged me into Hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Where damned devils roar and yell,
Chained to a stake.

Yet here I am a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample:
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' thy flock.

After confessing to some sins of greed and lust, Holy Willie says to the Lord:

May be thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

Lord, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race;
But od confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace,
An' public shame.

Holy Willie then invokes the wrath of God upon Gavin Hamilton, the presbytery of Ayr, and Robert Aiken. Aiken was a friend of Burns, a Freemason, and a Liberal; and God is particularly urged not only to punish him remorselessly, but also to extirpate those who had not boycotted him:

Lord, in the day of vengeance try him:
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their prayer!
But, for thy people's sake, destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excelled by nane,
An' a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen.

I cannot part with Burns without mentioning his satire on "The Kirk's Alarm". There were in the town of Ayr, in the west of Scotland, two ministers named McGill and Dalrymple upon whom some light had dawned, and who fell under suspicion of heresy. In the trial of McGill he had for his attorney Robert Aiken, just spoken of—a provincial prototype of our own Robert Ingersoll; the educated, fair-minded people sided with McGill; the common rabble were for crucifying him. It was a great tempest in a teapot, and it tended to establish a precedent for our own heresy trials. Burns gives a lively picture of the prosecutors; but they were too insignificant to be dwelt on by us, and we shall limit our notice to the opening stanzas of the poem, if such it may be called:

Orthodox, orthodox,
Wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience—
There's a heretic blast,
Has been blawn i' the wast,
That what is not sense must be nonsense.

Doctor Mac, Doctor Mac,
Ye should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil-doers wi' terror;
To join faith and sense,
Upon any pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,
It was mad, I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing;
Provost John is still deaf
To the Church's relief,
And Orator Bob is its ruin.

D'rymple mild, D'rymple mild,
Tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye,
Old Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three's one and twa.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons,
Seize your spiritual guns,
Ammunition ye never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff,
Will be powder enough,
And your skulls are storehouses of lead.

Burns was a man of deeply religious spirit, as every reader of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" will quickly acknowledge.

No poet of his time gave less attention to current events and problems than Sir Walter Scott. With the exception of his discreditable Life of Napoleon, which was a pot-boiler produced in his day of distress, he may be said to have ignored altogether his own generation. He was a faithful Scotchman, and he had no taste or liking for England's political or religious disputes. His mind and his heart dwelt in the days gone by when Scotland was an independent nation and her sons were regarded on the Continent, not as an inferior brand of provincial Englishmen, but as brave and adventurous Caledonians fit to take rank with the ELITE of the world, and worthy of the freedom which they were ever ready to do battle for. Scott revolutionized the inveterate English notions about the Middle Ages, and in doing so he unconsciously wrought a great change in the English religious world. Down to his time the average educated Englishman looked upon the Middle Ages as a period of Cimmerian darkness, in which no virtue, patriotism or true religion could live. This mental attitude was the natural result of the conditions under which England had so slowly grown

into a homogeneous nation, and of its detachment from the centers of European civilization. The victim—and ultimately the beneficiary—of four conquests. each of which was followed by the destruction of the social and political system that preceded it and by the unbridled domination of hostile aliens, the land finally became a slave to its French masters, whose language supplanted the Teutonic speech in all public affairs and in all cultivated social intercourse. So long did this French domination last, and so hard was it for the English tongue to regain a respectable position in the land, that there is very little worthy the name of English literature prior to the period of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. A masterful King having quarreled with the Pope and put England in the Reformation column, it was inevitable that the nascent literature of the country should become deeply tinged with prejudice against the Continental opponents of the Reformation, and against the policies, traditions, histories, sentiments and prepossessions to which those opponents appealed. This English prejudice was rudely shaken by Scott. A reaction set in and a surprising interest in the Middle Ages spread rapidly amongst the educated classes. A new world had been opened up to the English mind by this Scotch Columbus. The scholars of the Church of England began to question the correctness of the positions which they had hitherto assumed and held on many questions of great importance in their view. The first public outcome of this questioning was that remarkable series of papers called "Tracts for the Times" and "Essays and Reviews", in which the Church of England fared so badly that a number of its leading lights seceded from it and went over to the Roman Catholic Church. Two of these seceders, Henry Edward Manning and John Henry Newman, attained a world-wide renown and died as Cardinals. The movement started by these converts or perverts, as the view-point shall determine, has gone on steadily among the clergy of the established Church and the English aristocracy ever since. The late Lord Beaconsfield declared that this secession to Rome had dealt to the English Church a blow from which it was still reeling.

What bearing has this movement upon Liberalism in religion? A very important bearing: it awoke the English mind from its lethargic self-complacency and set in motion another movement,

not towards Rome but towards Reason; and this second movement has also gone on steadily down to this day. A good illustration of it is afforded by the Newman family: The impulse given by Scott drove John Henry Newman into the Catholic Church, and at the same time it drove his equally gifted brother Francis William Newman into the ranks of Rationalism. Readers of Thackeray's "Pendennis" will recall the interesting discussion of "What is Truth?" The two brothers referred to in that discussion were the Newman brothers. Every influence that tends to uproot old prejudices and to show ministers, parsons and bigots that they have been living in a fool's paradise, and that they possess no monopoly of truth and have no special insight into the ways and purposes of Providence, is an influence on the side of Liberalism. Judged by this test, Sir Walter Scott was a mighty power in freeing the human intellect throughout all English-speaking lands. The ferocious fanaticism that once characterized Englishmen has been greatly mollified and moderated, and it cannot truthfully be said of the late Queen Victoria, as it was of George the Third, that she

> "Left her subjects still behind;
> One-half as mad, and t'other no less blind."

So superstitious were the English in the time of Queen Anne, that they believed the monarch had power by the touch of the hand to cure that scirrhous tumor which they called the "King's evil." The great Samuel Johnson believed this and submitted himself—in his unripe youth, to be sure—to the regal touch. What a commentary on the intelligence of the age! That was indeed the

> "evil time
> When souls were fettered and thought was a crime."

Thomas Campbell was almost as radical a friend of freedom as Robert Burns himself, and he had but little of the reactionary conservatism that pervades the works of Scott. A true expression of his noble and liberal mind on the subject that we are especially considering may be found in "Hallowed Ground", where, after encouraging the battle for liberty, and asking "what can alone ennoble fight?"—to which he answers:

> " A noble cause,"

The poet exclaims:

Give that! and welcome war to brace
Her drums! and rend Heaven's reeking space!

Recovering from the fervent appeal to arms, and swayed by the spirit of Jesus, these grand lines follow:

And place our trophies where men kneel
To Heaven!—but Heaven rebukes my zeal!
The cause of Truth and human weal,
O God above!
Transfer it from the sword's appeal
To peace and Love.

Peace, Love! the cherubim, that join
Their spread wings o'er Devotion's shrine,
Prayers sound in vain, and temples shine,
Where they are not—
The heart alone can make divine
Religion's spot.

To incantations dost thou trust,
And pompous rites in domes august?
See moldering stones and metal's rust
Belie the vaunt,
That men can bless one pile of dust
With chime or chaunt.

The ticking wood-worm mocks thee, man!
Thy temples—creeds themselves grow wan!
But there's a dome of nobler span,
A temple given
Thy faith, that bigots dare not ban—
Its space is Heaven!

Its roof star-pictured Nature's ceiling,
Where tracing the rapt spirit's feeling,
And God himself to man revealing,
The harmonious spheres
Make music, though unheard their pealing
By mortal ears.

Fair stars! are not your beings pure?
Can sin, can death, your worlds obscure?
Else why so swell the thoughts at your
Aspect above?
Ye must be Heavens that make us sure
Of heavenly love!

And in your harmony sublime
I read the doom of distant time;
That man's regenerate soul from crime
Shall yet be drawn,
And reason on his mortal clime
Immortal dawn.

What's hallowed ground? 'Tis what gives birth
To sacred thoughts in souls of worth!
Peace! Independence! Truth! go forth
Earth's compass round;
And your high priesthood shall make earth
All hallowed ground.

"Poetry," says Shelley, "is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds;" and again, "Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in Man." Shelley, says a judicious writer, "was by divine election a seer,—the poet of the hereafter, 'the herald of the golden year', the prophet of universal religious freedom and universal human brotherhood! In him culminated the great tendencies of our time,—its democracy, its socialism, its scepticism, and its pantheism."

Shelley's loving friend and biographer, Leigh Hunt, deserves more than a passing notice; but I shall give you only his most famous poem,

ABOU BEN ADHEM.

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel, writing in a book of gold;—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,
And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men."
The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

The author of the "Bridge of Sighs," of the "Song of the Shirt," of "Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg," and of the "Letter to Rae Wilson," was a valiant champion of religious freedom; a fact which, in spite of his unaffected piety and his blameless life, subjected him to much persecution and annoyance from the bigots of his day. If time allowed, you would enjoy extracts from the poetic epistle to Rae Wilson, in which Tom Hood's inimitable combination of puns, wit, humor and sarcasm is brought to bear with crushing effect on his intolerant tormentors;

instead, however, I shall give you a sample of the manner in which he replied in prose to a misguided woman who had in his last illness sent him a religious tract for the avowed purpose of converting that true Christian gentleman to Christianity. After telling her that the only danger is, that he will be "converted from Christianity," and that this will not happen so long as he can distinguish true piety from mag-piety, he proceeds:

"It is, I know, the policy of your faction, Madam, to decry literature, which they abhor, as the devil hates gospel, and for a similar reason. For all the most celebrated authors—the wisest and most learned in the ways of mankind—have concurred in denouncing and exposing Tartuffes, Maw-worms, and Cantwells—in short, sanctimonious folly and knavery of every description. Such writers, I know, would be called scoffers and infidels; but a divine hand, Madam, incapable of injustice, has drawn a full-length picture of a self-righteous Pharisee; and holy lips prone to all gentleness and charity have addressed their sharpest rebuke to spiritual pride and religious hypocrisy. Are the sacrilegious animals aware that in their retaliation they are kicking at Him?

"In behalf of our literature I will boldly say that to our LAY authors it is mainly owing that the country is not at this hour enthralled by priestcraft, superstition, and, if you please, POPERY; which, by the bye, has met more efficient opponents in Dante, Boccaccio, and Rabelais (profane writers, Madam) than in the McNeils, the MacGhees, and the Macaws that have screamed within Exeter Hall. * * * * * * * And now, Madam, farewell. Your mode of recalling yourself to my memory reminds me that your fanatical mother insulted mine in the last days of her life, which was marked by every Christian virtue, by the presentation of a tract addressed to infidels. I remember also that the same heartless woman intruded herself—with less reverence than a Mohawk squaw would have exhibited—on the chamber of death, and interrupted with her jargon almost my last interview with my dying parent.

"Such reminiscences warrant severity: but, if more be wanting, know that my poor sister has been excited by a circle of canters like yourself into a religious phrenzy, and is at this moment in a private mad-house. I am, Madam, yours with disgust, THOMAS HOOD."

THOMAS MOORE waged more systematic and continuous war upon English bigotry and intolerance than any other poet of his time. His unbounded social popularity, his known intimacy with the Prince of Wales (afterward George the Fourth), his close and confidential relations to the great leaders of the Whig party, the brilliancy of his wit—the fact, in brief, that he was "the poet of all circles, and the idol of his own"—gave him an extraordinary influence in behalf of civil, political and religious freedom and equality. A political squib or satire by Moore appearing in the London "Times," "Chronicle", or "Morning Post" was more dreaded by the Tories than the heaviest artillery of the Whig orators. It was sought by the reading public with an avidity similar to that which we ourselves displayed for a fresh cartoon in Harper's Weekly from the pencil of Thomas Nast in the days of his popularity and power. Moore's humorous and satirical poems are the best examples of political raillery in the English language, and they exerted upon their time a wider and more healthful influence than has ever been wielded by either the light or the serious work of any other poet. His unsurpassed lyrical power was one of the mighty forces of his day. Coleridge was warranted in saying that Moore had written a larger number of beautiful lyrics than any poet that ever lived. Anything like an adequate treatment of the services rendered by Thomas Moore to the cause of liberalism in religion and progress in politics would easily cover an hour's talk; and as nothing of this kind can be attempted, we must content ourselves with a single specimen of his broad-gauged sentiments:

COME, SEND ROUND THE WINE.

Come, send round the wine, and leave points of belief
To simpleton sages, and reasoning fools;
This moment's a flower too fair and brief,
To be withered and stained by the dust of the schools.
Your glass may be purple, and mine may be blue,
But, while they are filled from the same bright bowl,
The fool who would quarrel for difference of hue,
Deserves not the comfort they shed o'er the soul.

Shall I ask the brave soldier, who fights by my side
In the cause of mankind, if our creeds agree?
Shall I give up the friend I have valued and tried
If he kneel not before the same altar with me?
From the heretic girl of my soul should I fly
To seek somewhere else a more orthodox kiss?
No! perish the hearts, and the laws that try
Truth, valor, or love, by a standard like this.

THE STORY OF A MEMORABLE PETITION.

BY ALFRED W. MARTIN.

When the "First Unitarian Society of Tacoma" became the "First Free Church of Tacoma," the first thought of the seceders from the Unitarian denomination was to acknowledge their debt to Unitarianism and aim at retaining the utmost possible fellowship. One and all of the sixty-five charter members of the new organization felt a great indebtedness to Unitarianism and wanted to give it expression. They realized that it would be both intellectually and morally wrong to ignore the past that had made the new movement possible. They recalled the stages in the evolution of Liberalism, interrelating as it does the Socinian movement, Unitarianism, the Free Religious Association of America and its first western child, born November 27th, 1892. Consequently they determined to withdraw from Unitarianism in the spirit of love, gratefully conscious of this historical continuity and relationship. There was no "slamming the door behind them" as they went out from the Unitarian denomination. On the contrary, resolutions were immediately drafted the tenor and content of which made it unmistakably plain that the desire was for an open door and all the fellowship that could be consistently enjoyed. They could not honorably continue to share all the advantages of association as before, yet while surrendering all those which secession necessitated, they dared to hope that some form of fellowship might still remain which it would not be unethical to adopt and which would perhaps prove mutually advantageous. The closing clause of the resolution drafted by the trustees and minister, unanimously adopted by the members of the First Free Church and forwarded to the Rev. Grindall Reynolds, then secretary of the American Unitarian Association, reads as follows:—

RESOLVED, that inasmuch as we recognize with gratitude our indebtedness to Unitarianism, and that inasmuch as it stands pledged IN PART to the cause of freedom in religion, the Secretary of the Americam Unitarian Association be requested to publish in the "Year Book" a list of Independent churches IN A SEPARATE CATEGORY, and that the name of the First Free Church of Tacoma and of its minister be recorded therein.

Was it unreasonable to expect that this proposal would be accepted? Had not Unitarian clergymen of note insisted again and

again on the "inclusiveness and all-sufficing freedom of the Unitarian movement?" How often was the phrase "our free fellowship" on the lips of Unitarian ministers and laymen! Did not every Unitarian heart beat with hope that the Saratoga Conference in 1894 would annul the contradicting preamble and tenth article and adopt a national constitution suited to the non-sectarian, cosmopolitan temper manifested by its most representative men? Surely then, there was abundant reason for the cherished expectation that the request of this Free Church would be granted. But no, in due time came Secretary Reynolds' letter stating that "the Board holds it to be inexpedient to form a second list of churches and minitsers as suggested in the communication from Tacoma." Just what was meant by "inexpedient" was not plain, but the remark made by a director of the Board throws much light on it. "If such a separate list were made," said he, "every church in the denomination would at once range itself on the side of Unitarianism or freedom and thus bring about the disruption of the body." To the same effect were the comments of the assistant secretary of the Association. The denomination he feared would be "split,"and after the experiences of the past eight years this would be "deplorable." He thought that——and——and——and other radical preachers would ask to be enrolled in the "separate category," and in view of the recently acquired harmony any such division must be avoided.

Most regretfully was the decision of the Association, through its board of directors, accepted. It meant that after all the spirit of "pure congregationalism," which Unitarians affect, does not compel respect for the wishes of any society that desires any kind of fellowship or affiliation; that, after all, the "free fellowship" of which so many ministers had so often spoken is still only a dream. It meant that the representatives of the Association, by their decision to deny our petition, committed another of those mistakes for which it is historically famous. Many there were, outside the Association and in it, who expressed their disapproval of the board's action. Some even went so far as to say that it fully justified the formation of a strictly free church. Over against the "Christian Register," with its editorial support of the position taken by the Association, stood "Unity" taking the Board of Directors to task for refusing "such a

reasonable and fraternal request," while the "Free Church Record" (the bi-monthly organ of the Tacoma Society) simply recorded the facts of the case and reprinted the editorials and articles relating to it as they appeared in the CHRISTIAN REGISTER, the PACIFIC UNITARIAN and UNITY. No one imagined that this record of the resolution and its results would ever prove of any practical value. But just a year ago the record was required. Rev. Charles F. Dole, minister of the Unitarian Church of Jamaica Plain, a suburb of Boston, had then heard, for the first time, of the resolution submitted by the Tacoma Free Church to the directors of the American Unitarian Association and of its rejection by that body. He expressed surprise and disappointment over the failure of the proposition and after reading the story of it as recorded in the first volume of the FREE CHURCH RECORD, he suggested a repetition of the proposal, believing that conditions in the denomination were such at present as to warrant the hope of bringing the matter to a successful issue. A fearless champion of freedom and fellowship in religion, not satisfied with having all the freedom and fellowship he wanted for himself, but eager to assist in procuring these for others who felt they had not enough of them, Mr. Dole assumed the task of conducting the experiment of a second appeal to the board of directors of the Association, himself. He prepared a memorable petition, secured for it nine signatures of representative Unitarian ministers, besides his own, and sent the document to the directors of the Association.

Simultaneously with Mr. Dole's experiment, though in no direct relation to it, came the withdrawal from the "Church Directory" of the "PACIFIC UNITARIAN," published at San Francisco, of the name of the Tacoma Free Church and of its minister, which for several years had appeared under the head of "affiliated churches," the editor voluntarily and magnanimously supporting, in this way, the desire of the Tacoma society to maintain the utmost fellowship consistent with its unsectarian position. Most unfortunate and disappointing this Pacific coast reversal of the fellowship policy was, all the more so as it came just when on the Atlantic coast an attempt was being made to advance the cause of liberal religious fellowship by means of Mr. Dole's petition.

THE PETITION.

To the President and Directors of the American Unitarian Association:

We the undersigned believe that the time has come when the scope of the Annual Year Book ought to be somewhat widened. There is a tendency throughout the country to the organization of independent churches. We believe that this tendency is natural and wholesome. It is at least possible that some of these churches are experiments towards a wider form of organization than has ever yet been fairly recognized. For various reasons there are sure to

be many people closely in sympathy with the most characteristic and progressive Unitarian thought, who are nevertheless unwilling to assume any denominational name. There are ministers of the highest character who prefer not to assume any name which seems to them to carry a sectarian meaning. We wish to make the bond of association as close as possible between all the earnest movements in the religious life of our times. What we ask is very simple. We request you, first, to change the name of the Year Book so as to read "The Year Book of Unitarian and Affiliated Churches". Then simply to begin a new list, beside "Unitarian Churches", of "Free or Independent churches which choose to be published in this Year Book, as representing their fellowship in the love of truth and in their desire to promote a noble religion." Also, a list, beside "Unitarian" ministers, of "ministers who wish to express their fellowship in all things which make for truth, righteousness and religion."

Inasmuch as there are actually independent organizations and ministers between whom and Unitarians there is as real harmony of thought and ideal as exists among Unitarians themselves, we believe that it can do nothing but good to the cause of religion, heartily to make a place wide enough to include all who may elect to be associated together. So far as the Unitarian name has permanent use and advantage it will thus remain for those whom it honestly describes. So far as there are those for whom its use is not an accurate description, Unitarians will at least gain through this proposed endeavor the sense of a closer cooperation with friends and neighbors whose highest aims are the same. We ask, therefore, that you give our request most careful thought and, if necessary, to let us appear before you more fully to explain what we desire.

Yours respectfully,

Charles F. Dole,	Edward D. Towle,
M. J. Savage,	William R. Lord,
S. M. Crothers,	James Eells,
Edward Cummings,	Charles G. Ames,
Paul R. Frothingham,	John W. Chadwick.

How admirable in conception, how masterly in statement, how tactful in form, how gracious in spirit, how reasonable in purpose, how timely in aim! Who would suppose that such a petition, originating from such a source, signed by such representative men and framed in the first year of the twentieth century would meet the same fate accorded the resolution of 1893. Passing into the hands of the "publication committee" of the Association's board of directors, this petition was briefly discussed and Secretary St. John instructed to submit the following communication:

25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass., Feb. 12th, 1902.

Messrs. Charles F. Dole, M. J. Savage, S. M. Crothers, Paul R. Frothingham, Edward D. Towle, William R. Lord, James Eells, Charles G. Ames, John W. Chadwick.

Gentlemen :—The Memorial which in November last you presented to the Directors of the American Unitarian Association, was referred to the Publication Committee of the Association. The Committee, therefore, now beg to offer the following reply to your communication.

We feel that we appreciate thoroughly the motive which prompts the request for a widening of the scope of the Annual Year-Book, and we certainly should not fail to sympathize with any movement which looked to the enlargement of our fellowship by a method that had in it the promise of valuable results. But, feeling as we do, that there is nothing in the Year-Book as it stands to forbid or even to repel the approach of any who may desire a closer walk with us, we are not able to see why the change proposed would act in any way as an inducement to actual affiliation between independent churches and our own body. There might seem to be affiliation in form; but would there be affiliation in fact? In other words, would any practical results be attained? Is it not fair to assume that when churches are organized on an independent basis, such action is taken with deliberation and with a clear intent and avoid "entangling alliances?" And is it not true, also, that the way is open for a free exchange of courtesies and even friendly services between such churches and our communion?

As a matter of fact, efforts have been made by the National Conference, the Western Conference and various State Conferences to gain closer fellowship with so-called independent churches, but thus far without avail. The door has been opened, but no one seems to have been impelled to enter. Is it not likely that an overture made by changing the name of the Year Book and providing for a list of affiliated churches would meet with the same lack of response? The gentlemen who appeared before the Publication Committee to urge the proposed change, failed to mention more than one church that might possibly be induced to avail itself of the opportunity for affiliation with the Unitarian body: and we do not hesitate to say that the bare possibility of securing this single church as a tolerant but not over-sympathetic ally would not, in our judgment, justify the Association in changing the name of its Year Book, especially as that name has, as we think, "a permanent use" and "honestly describes" the people of our churches.

In short, although we believe in the principle on which the

Memorial is based, we do not feel that the time for action of the kind asked for has yet come. Yours respectfully,

The Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association,
By the Secretary.

The main reason, then, for the rejection of the proposal was the inability of the petitioners to cite more than one church which would surely come into the proposed new roll. One good case seemed to them enough, though three additional cases might have been cited had they only been known of at the time. To the main reason stated by the secretary must be added the unrecorded fear that, as one of the directors said, "were there such a separate list some of the Unitarian churches would say they preferred to have their names transferred from the regular list to the shorter list, and this would be a calamity." But, reverting to the main reason, is it not enough that one church exists desiring to enjoy the "free fellowship" so often referred to in Unitarian sermons and speeches as something already achieved? Even were there not a single church seeking that fellowship, would it not be a good and glorious thing to stand for it now, to anticipate the coming of such a society and of such a request by having a place prepared for it in the Year-Book? As a matter of fact there are at least FOUR societies ready to avail themselves of such a privilege, were it granted. "The First Free Church" of Benton Harbor, Mich., the "Independent Church" of Boston, the "Society for Universal Religion," of Seattle andthe "First Free Church" of Tacoma; all four would gladly affiliate with the Unitarian body in the manner suggested in the Tacoma resolution and in Mr. Dole's petition.

Most unfortunate it was that this fact escaped the committee's notice. Let it be remembered, however, that the defeat of this fellowship-proposal in 1893 and again in 1902, does not express the sentiment of the whole Unitarian denomination but only that of the "publication committee" of the American Unitarian Association. We are far from believing that if Mr. Dole's petition were brought before the National Conference it would be voted down. We believe that the great majority of our Unitarian brethren fully sympathize with Mr. Dole's project and share the regret and disappointment felt by the petitioners. We believe, moreover, that the day will come when that sympathy will secure spontaneous, practical and effective expression. The cause of an ever-widening religious fellowship is a winning cause and no temporary defeat should lead us to distrust the certain victory that awaits it. Meanwhile let this second chapter of the story take its place in the tenth volume of our organ, for, as the day came when Mr. Dole asked for the first chapter to supply material for the second, so the day may come when another champion of freedom and fellowship in religion will call for this chapter to furnish material for a third and, let us hope, final chapter.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

TACOMA

The Council of twenty-five, mention of which was made in our last issue, met on the evening of May 22nd, at the residence of Mr. Martin. C. W. Thompson was elected president and Miss Maud E. Remington secretary. Representation from the membership of the church is as follows:

The O. B. Frothingham Fraternity (the men' club), 5.—C. W. Thompson, R. H. Hotchkin, W. H. Fehse, George Rogers, Theo. Shenkenberg.

The Woman's Union, 5.—Mrs. Joseph Hunt, Mrs. Samuel Collyer, Mrs. C. T. Peterson, Mrs. R. E. Frye, Mrs. F. W. Low.

The Young Ladies' Alliance, 2.—Miss Laura Taylor, Miss Anna Nachtsheim.

The Fortnightly Club (Young People's), 2.—Henry Garretson, Miss Laura Frier.

Sunday School, 2.—Harvey Johnson, Miss. A. C. Van Ruyper.

Choir, 1.—L. H. Pearson

Old Town Workers, 1.—Mrs. A. W. Martin.

General Membership of the church, 6.—W. E. Theodore, S. S. Loeb, N. McAulay, C. S. Crowell, Miss M. E. Remington, Miss A. Rice.

SEATTLE

The season's Sunday evening meetings in Elk's Hall closed May 25th. After Mr. Martin's discourse and the answering of questions found in the "Question Box" the Society enjoyed a social hour. Good music and refreshments were provided by the Woman's Union. Mr. Martin announced that next season he hoped to carry out three long-cherished plans,—to meet regularly once a month with the "Womans Union" to organize a Sunday School and to arrange for the reception of callers on Monday afternoons, at a convenient place down town. The construction of the interurban electric railway will make the fulfillment of the these plans possible, only one hour being required for the journey from Tacoma to Seattle.

Regular Sunday meetings of the Society will be resumed Sept. 28th.

BENTON HARBOR, MICH.

The people who have attended the services conducted by Mr. Beem in the Opera House voted to organize a non-sectarian Society on the 18th May. The EVENING NEWS of the 19th make the following report of the meeting.

A meeting of those interested in establishing a liberal, non-sectarian religious movement met last evening in the G. A. R. hall. After a discussion of names for the society it was unanimously decided to organize the First Free church of Benton Harbor, based on human rights. It was voted to adopt the following objects as a basis of union:

To promote free, spiritual and universal religion, not the religions that are creed-bound, traditional and sectarian. To foster inclusiveness in religious fellowship, or fraternity in freedom. To maintain a platform for utter freedom of thought and speech on all questions in morals, economics and religion. To search for the truth on the great open questions of ethics and religion by adopting the method of truth-seeking employed by science and which is applicable to all subjects. To aim at the realization of the highest moral and religious ideal of humanity both in the individual and in society. To cultivate and disseminate the spirit of reverence, justice, love and peace.

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